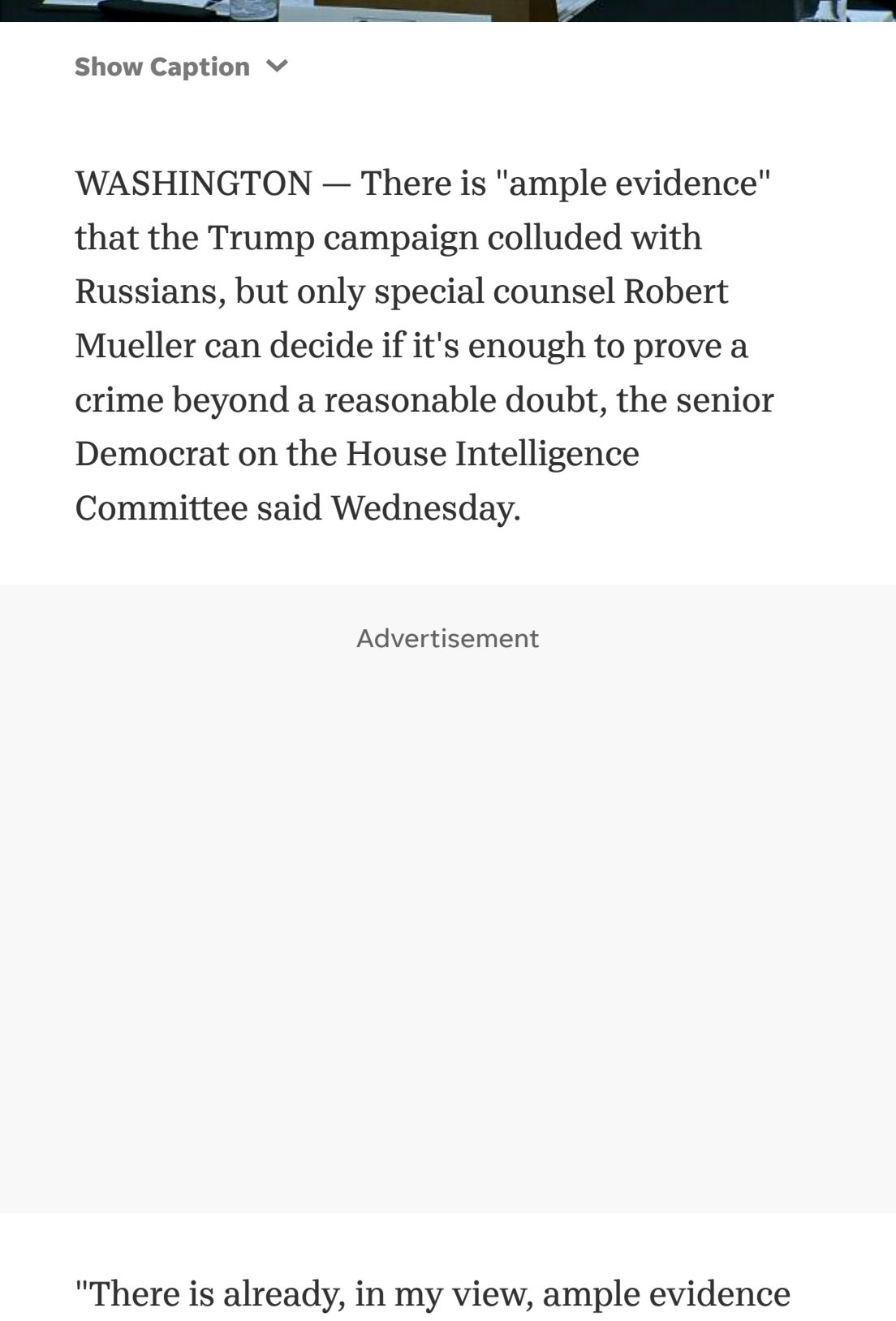


Adam Schiff: There is 'ample evidence' of collusion between Trump campaign, Russians

ERIN KELLY | USA TODAY
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WASHINGTON — There is "ample evidence" that the Trump campaign colluded with Russians, but only special counsel Robert Mueller can decide if it's enough to prove a crime beyond a reasonable doubt, the senior Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee said Wednesday.

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"There is already, in my view, ample evidence in the public domain on the issue of collusion if you're willing to see it," Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., told reporters at a newsmaker breakfast hosted by the *Christian Science Monitor*. "If you want to blind yourself, then you can look the other way."



Rep. Adam Schiff delivers remarks to members of the news media on Capitol Hill on July 11, 2017. MICHAEL REYNOLDS, EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

President Trump has [repeatedly denied any collusion](#) and has denounced the Russia investigation as "a witch hunt" fueled by Democrats who are angry that Hillary Clinton lost the 2016 presidential election.

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Schiff said there is evidence — heard by the committee behind closed doors — that he can't talk about publicly because it remains classified. But he said there is plenty of evidence of collusion that has been reported publicly, including:

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— Former Trump campaign adviser George Papadopoulos [pleaded guilty](#) to lying to the FBI about talking in April 2016 to a professor with close ties to the Kremlin who told Papadopoulos that Moscow had "dirt" on Hillary Clinton. The professor told him about thousands of emails the Russians had from the Clinton campaign.

— Donald Trump Jr., Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner, and former campaign chairman Paul Manafort met with a Russian attorney at [Trump Tower](#) in June 2016 after being promised "dirt" on Clinton. The campaign later communicated to meeting organizers that they were disappointed they didn't get what they were promised.

— In July 2017, the president and White House advisers put together a misleading [statement](#) about the nature of the Trump Tower meeting, saying that it was for the purpose of discussing Russian adoptions.

— The Trump campaign knew through Papadopoulos that the Russians had obtained thousands of emails from the Clinton campaign. Then-candidate Trump publicly asked the Russians in July 2016 to hack Clinton and find her "30,000 emails that are missing" from the personal email server she used while secretary of State. WikiLeaks began posting emails from the Clinton campaign in October, just weeks before the November election.

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— Former White House national security adviser Michael Flynn held secret conversations with Russian officials in December 2016 during the presidential transition period, promising to undermine sanctions imposed against Russia by the Obama administration for meddling in the U.S. election. Flynn [pleaded guilty](#) late last year to lying to the FBI about those conversations.

"All of this is evidence of collusion," said Schiff, a former federal prosecutor. "Now, I've never said that there was proof beyond a reasonable doubt. That's for Bob Mueller to decide. But to say there's no evidence of collusion, you'd have to ignore all this."

Mueller is investigating Russian interference in the 2016 election, possible collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russians, and possible obstruction of justice by the president.

"If this were a trial on the issue of did the Trump campaign conspire with the Russians to interfere or violate U.S. election laws by providing help to the Trump campaign, if this were a trial on that conspiracy charge...all of that evidence would come in as evidence of collusion," Schiff said.

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The House and Senate intelligence committees and the Senate Judiciary Committee are each conducting their own Russia probes.

While it is up to Mueller to conduct the criminal investigation and file any charges he feels are warranted, it is up to the House panel "to tell the country as much as we can about what we have been able to learn," Schiff said.

Even if Mueller determines that he can't file criminal charges of conspiracy, the committee should inform people of any "unpatriotic" or "immoral" actions, even if they weren't illegal, Schiff said.

"It's not fine to work with a foreign power even if there is no violation of law involved," he said.

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